Route Improvements.....2

Transit Talk.....3

Howard Transit Recognized...4

Vay 10 GO! TRANSIT NEWS FOR HOWARD COUNTY

A Publication of Howard County Government

County Executive Talks Frankly About Transit

Ken Ulman was sworn in as Howard County Executive on December 4, 2006 and has demonstrated his commitment to environmental issues by developing a Commission on the Environment and Sustainability. Certainly, transportation has been a part of the discussion for improving the environment.

It has been a challenging year for Howard Transit due to the transition to a new service operator and with mechanical problems from an aging fleet of vehicles. Still, Mr. Ulman was pleased to talk about the current issues and to share his thoughts for the future of transit in Howard County.

Way To Go: Howard Transit and HT Ride vehicles have been plagued with mechanical problems over recent months. Why has this become a problem for the County?

Ken Ulman: Traditionally, Howard Transit, like other local bus services in Maryland, relied upon significant State funding, especially for capital replacement expenses. During the past State Administration there was little to no capital funding received from the State for each of the last four years. As a result, vehicles that are past their useful life are still being used in service. Transportation staff are now working to fast track the replacement of vehicles using mostly County funds. Typically, buses purchased today, can take many months to be delivered.

Visit

www.howardtransit.com

and click JOIN EMAIL

LIST on the homepage to

receive your

newsletter electronically.

But, staff located a number of vehicles that were immediately available in the region. Eleven new vehicles have been purchased and placed into service over the past few months. These include 7 buses and 4 hybrid sedans used for HT Ride services. And additional diesel-electric hybrid buses have been ordered. But we still have a long way to go.



Howard County Executive Ken Ulman

Way To Go: You have a goal to make Howard County a "green community". What impact will this philosophy have on the transit system?

Ken Ulman: Dependence on fossil fuels and the resultant air quality issues are a great concern to our region. I am committed to replacing transit vehicles, to the greatest extent possible, with hybrid vehicles that decrease demand for fuel and significantly reduce air pollution. More importantly, I am hopeful County residents will see an attitude change in their local government regarding the environment and realize that everyone has a role to play, especially regarding transit.

Continued on page 2



County Executive Talks About Transit continued from page 1



Way To Go: A recent survey of Howard County residents revealed that 91% considered quality transit service an important public service. What are your views on the importance of transit services?

Ken Ulman: Consider me part of that 91%!

In November, unbeknownst to Howard Transit Officials, ten members of this Administration (myself included) spent half a day riding on County bus lines. In groups of two we covered five different bus routes. We did this for several reasons. First and foremost, I wanted to see how the system is working with my own eyes. Overall, the ten of us were pleased with our experience that day. Everyone remarked on the fact that the buses were generally well used and that most of the rides ended on schedule. Unfortunately, none of the buses had signage explaining that riders must have exact fare, and some of the buses were running early, which caused some problems. I met with Howard Transit officials personally to discuss my observations and have been assured that corrective actions are underway.

Way To Go: What is your vision for Howard Transit?

Ken Ulman: Howard Transit receives requests almost daily for additional bus service. Typically, riders ask for more frequent service including late evening and on weekends, service to more locations and shorter travel times.

I would like to honor all of these requests, but we simply cannot afford to make all these changes at once. But we will make steady progress in meeting these objectives by prioritizing improvements each year of my Administration.

First and foremost, we must replace our aging fleet so that customers can feel more confident that they will arrive safely at their destination. We will then begin to look at other improvements to increase the convenience for our customers. Of particular importance, we must be responsive to the evolving changes for Columbia Town Center as it becomes a more important hub for coordinating local and regional bus service and eventually commuter rail service. We must also be ready to accommodate future demand for service to the Fort Meade area. Last but not least, we must ensure that transit options are available to individuals with disabilities and senior citizens through our regular bus routes and through specialized services.

I will work closely with our transit officials and the community to make transit a stronger and more efficient system and an alternative to driving alone for all Howard County citizens.

TRANSIT TALK

Transit Talk offers up-to-date information about transit in Howard County.

TRANSFERS

Howard Transit and Connect-A-Ride have a reciprocal agreement regarding transfers between the two systems. Transfer passes are accepted between both services provided they are used within two hours of issuance. Ten-trip tickets and monthly passes issued by either Howard Transit or Connect-A-Ride are accepted on both systems as well. For more information about passes and transfers, contact Customer Service at 1-800-270-9553.

COMMUTER SOLUTIONS

Commuter Solutions of Howard County provides rideshare matching services and provides information about transit options in Howard County including MTA Commuter Buses, MARC Train service to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore and local services. Commuter Solutions also assists businesses in the County develop ridesharing programs and provides information about transit benefit and tax credit programs. For more information or assistance, call 410-313-3130 or visit www.howardcommutersolutions.com.



Improved Service on the Gold and Purple Routes

New and Improved service on the Gold and Purple Routes began on October 15, 2007.

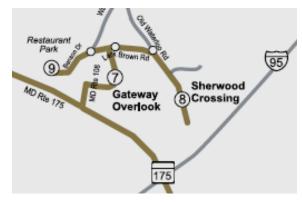
The Gold Route provides service between Columbia Mall and the Maryland Food Center in Jessup. Stops along the Gold Route include Oakland Mills Village Center, Long Reach Village Center and the newly opened Gateway Overlook Shopping Center.

New stores including Costco, Best Buy, Lowes and a number of restaurants and other retail stores are now open at Gateway Overlook.

The enhanced service now operates during the midday and operates later in the evening. The Gold Route continues to run Monday-Friday.

The Purple Route operates between the Laurel Mall and the Elkridge Corners Shopping Center along the Route 1 corridor and now runs Monday-Saturday. Weekday service operates between 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM and Saturday service runs between 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM. Stops along the route include the Dorsey MARC Train Station, Elkridge Library

and Senior Center and the Maryland Food Center where passengers can transfer to the Gold and Silver Routes and the MTA 320 Commuter Bus that runs between Laurel and downtown Baltimore.



The Gold Route now serves Gateway Overlook Shopping Center and provides midday service

To view schedules for all Howard Transit Routes visit www.howardtransit.com or contact Customer Service at 1-800-270-9553 to have schedules mailed.

When Will Your Bus Arrive?

Howard Transit uses NextBus Automated Vehicle Locator (AVL) technology to provide customers with real-time arrival information for all routes.

To see when a bus will arrive at a particular stop simply click the *View a Real-*

Time Arrival button on the **Howard Transit** homepage.

View a Real-Time Arrival

From this point, select the route and stop location to see when the bus will arrive at a particular stop. The NextBus system now allows the option of selecting a live map or a Google Map.

The live map displays the location of the bus as it moves along a route. Stops can be selected to determine when the next bus will arrive at that location.

The Google Map displays clear and distinct views of stop locations and nearby cross streets for all Howard Transit bus routes.

Lastly, electronic signs are located at key stops throughout the system and provide real-time arrival information.

DID YOU KNOW?

Howard County Tourism, Howard County Recreation and Parks and other County organizations have worked together to create the first-ever Howard County Wildlife Driving Tour.

Visitors and residents alike can enjoy a new eco-tourism experience in Howard County. The tour navigates 17 different parks in the county. A different wildlife species is highlighted at each location.

Several locations are accessible through Howard Transit and Connect-A-Ride, these locations are indicated by a bus icon on the guide.

To receive a copy contact Howard County Tourism at 410-313-1904 or email amanda@visithowardcounty.com.



Howard Transit Receives Best Fixed Route Award

Howard Transit was named "2007 Best Fixed Route Bus System" in the State of Maryland by the Transportation Association of Maryland (TAM). The award was presented in October during the annual TAM conference in Ocean City, Maryland. The award pays tribute to a locally-operated

transit system that demonstrates innovative programming and commitment to service.

TAM officials noted Howard County's commitment to making bus service more accessible for all passengers by improving sidewalk connections to bus stops, installing more bus shelters and purchasing low floor buses. Howard Transit was also cited for its leadership in being among the first local bus systems in Maryland to acquire environmentally friendly hybrid vehicles. Additionally, TAM praised Howard Transit for creatively restructuring several routes in order to

provide shorter passenger wait times, earlier morning and later evening service hours, as well as service to new destinations.

Howard Transit provided more than 860,000 passenger trips last year and estimates continued growth in fiscal year 2008 to well over 900,000 trips.



Carl Balser, Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning accepts the 2007 Best Fixed Route Award from Paul Wiedefeld, Administrator of the Maryland Transit Administration

Howard Transit is a service of Howard County Government and is managed by Corridor Transportation



Corporation

For Route and Schedule

Information visit
www.howardtransit.com

or call 1-800-270-9553

This publication is available in alternative format upon request



Department of Planning & Zoning 3430 Court House Drive Ellicott City, MD 21043 PRSRT STD U.S. POSTAGE PAID Ellicott City, MD Permit No. 112